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BOOK REVIEWS

THE ACTUAL WORKING OF THE HISTORY SYLLABUS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS*

The object of this paper is not to champion the *Syllabus*,² but to state the aims of the makers; to present the reports of teachers and pupils who use the book, and to suggest certain questions for discussion. It is desirable that both faults and virtues may be frankly stated and discussed by teachers who have used the book. The committee will be glad to receive reports as to the ways in which the *Syllabus* has proved useful, suggestions as to how it could be made more useful, or statements of difficulties in its use. The makers of the *Syllabus* would really include in its broader sense not merely the ten members of the committee, but also over a score of other teachers directly concerned. This fact at once suggests one of the aims of the committee and the Association. It was their intention to make the *Syllabus* a piece of co-operative work which should represent practicable and tested methods.

This is the kernel of the discussion. Does the book, in the words of a secondary teacher who has tested it, combine "common-sense, experience, and scholarship so as to create a really usable *Syllabus*"? Or is it too difficult, too much the work of the college specialist? Can it satisfy both the secondary teacher who is beginning work either in history or in a given course, and also the trained teacher of successful experience, and, finally, the college examiner? On these points it is desirable to hear from all three classes of teachers. In general, the aims of the committee and the working of the *Syllabus* may be discussed under three heads. The *Syllabus* was designed to do three things: (1) to save time; (2) to guide to the use of the best available methods and materials; (3) to stimulate both teacher and pupil. Now, in actual use, does it accomplish these three aims?

1. It should save the time of the teacher in preparing topics and references, and in hunting up the best books. It should aid teacher and pupil in getting quickly at books in the school and public library. In the classroom, it should save the time often expended in writing out and copying topics and references, and in assigning general and special work. It should save the pupil time in preparation, and help him to see before coming to class some of the questions on which he should seek information. The greater clearness of a printed and complete outline for all four courses should give a view of the field which is clearer and more comprehensive. It is with this last point in mind that there is given, even in the separate pamphlets for pupils' use, a "General Survey of the Field," of three or four pages, for each of the courses. "It

* Read before the New England History Teachers' Association, at Springfield, Mass., April 15, 1905, by Professor Herbert D. Foster, of Dartmouth College.

² *A History Syllabus for Secondary Schools, Outlining the Four Years' Course in History Recommended by the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association.* By a special Committee of the New England History Teachers' Association. H. D. Foster, *Chairman*; W. H. Cushing, S. B. Fay, C. H. Haskins, E. F. Henderson, E. K. Kendall, E. Kimball, B. Perrin, E. A. Start, E. M. Walker. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1904. \$1.20.

puts me two years' work ahead in my work," writes one teacher. "Time saved in mechanical matters liberates energy for more vital things." "It saves at least ten minutes a day required for dictation, a gain of almost an hour a week for discussion, or thirty hours, at least, a year." "Work is done and books are used by pupils which would never be reached without it." One teacher reports that, having the printed topics and references in their hands, pupils take out books in advance and work ahead at the end of the week, or when they have spare time. Another writes that pupils find it useful in making up lost work.

In making out the topics, and especially in the selection of the "Additional Topics," one of the aims the committee had in mind was to enable work in history and English to go hand in hand. In schools where much composition work is done it is hoped that time may be saved and work correlated by utilizing the topics and references for composition in English. The teacher of English would often be glad to have pupils write on topics in history with which they have already dealt in the history class, and for which references have been given. The pupil would write with more intelligence and interest on a subject for which he has already acquired some historical background. It is the lack of just such historical background which makes much composition work so painful and discouraging to both teacher and pupil. This is a point deserving emphasis. The method has been occasionally tried, and with success; and it is hoped will be further tested and reported upon by teachers who find it either helpful or impracticable. It is a method recommended to the secondary school by some college departments of English and history. The difficulty in most schools doubtless is that there is only time to do the composition work required in connection with the books laid down for entrance in English.

2. The *Syllabus* is intended as a guide to essential things to be studied, to the best books to be used, and to sane and tested methods. It is intended to suggest the relations between subjects and courses; to aid teacher and pupil in working out the four courses in orderly sequence; to suggest subjects suitable for comparison, map-work, and review; and to indicate where the most useful material is to be found. "We do not get the cart before the horse," writes one pupil. "I can see the whole because I can look back easily," writes another. The references and the books are reported as useful and available. In the map-work, as in other forms of work, the committee sought, especially in ancient history, to meet the needs of the school with ample or with little time. This is secured by the use of smaller type for advanced or college preparatory work in ancient history; and by the inclusion of "Additional Topics" in all four courses for the more fortunate schools. In the few cases where there is not enough map-work to meet the needs of an enthusiastic teacher, he will find it easy to suggest other subjects.

In some schools the books are not available. Often this lack may be made good by the use of the public library. Where this is not feasible, the *Syllabus* may prove useful in showing school and town authorities the value and necessity of a good body of reference books. For each of the four courses there is given a list of books for a small school library, costing about \$25. This is followed by a longer list of books referred to in the outline and adapted for a town or large school library. In all the brief lists, and in the longer list for the American history, the price is given. In the outlines, frequent and specific references are given to these books. These references are a guarantee that the books are likely to be used; they therefore constitute an added argument for their purchase by school or town authorities.

The teacher of history needs his library just as much as the teacher of chemistry or physics needs his laboratory, or the teacher of manual training his shop and tools. Libraries are our laboratories; books and maps, our tools of trade. If we can convince the citizen and the school committee of this, we may be sure the generous public spirit of the land will respond and adequately furnish our historical workshops. Public interest in history and in historical teaching is rapidly developing; and we need not fear that an intelligent American community, when once it sees the need, will fail to find some way of meeting reasonable demands for the tools of trade. It is not characteristic of America to ask the schools in which it takes just pride to make bricks without straw. The smaller and older communities of New England are in danger of being outstripped by the newer communities of the middle and western states. In many of these smaller places the teacher will have to develop his ingenuity in raising money by various devices until public sentiment is sufficiently developed for the taxpayers to meet their just obligations.

Can the *Syllabus* be used to advantage by a teacher who is beginning a subject, and also by an experienced teacher capable of making an outline of his own? Both classes of teachers asked for advance copies of the manuscript, and both report its satisfactory use. "It is useful to me in beginning to teach a course in American history," writes one teacher, and others confirm her statement. "I can omit, modify, and get pupils to work out topics in more detail," writes another teacher of unusual training and successful experience. The *Syllabus* is not intended to be used rigidly, but rather, as one teacher writes, "with common-sense." The teacher of judgment and experience will find ample freedom to modify to suit his needs or those of the pupils, and plenty of room to turn around in to meet his own individual methods and ideas of emphasis. The committee did not desire to prescribe to the teacher, or to deny him his individuality, but rather to give him the wherewithal to develop it. The inexperienced teacher, or the one with few books or little time, will make more use of the references classified as "brief accounts;" the more experienced or better-equipped teacher will make larger use himself, and through his pupils, of the "longer accounts" and of the "sources" and of the "additional topics." By such simple devices the *Syllabus* is proving sufficiently elastic and broad to meet the needs of various kinds of teachers and schools without needless discouragement and perplexity. Yet even in the best schools the pupils need to be cautioned more than once that they are not expected to read all the references.

3. The *Syllabus* was also designed to stimulate. Teachers report that it has largely increased the amount of reading and the use of good books without pressure upon the pupils. Two experienced teachers desire to urge strongly the purchase of the whole book rather than the fifteen-cent pupils' pamphlets for the separate courses. For this they give two reasons: first, the pupils get the bearings of the whole four-year course and a comprehensive outline of ancient, mediæval, and modern European, English and American history, and are able to utilize or make cross-references; second, the pupils can use the outlines, references, and bibliographies after graduation. The pupils themselves are reported as desiring copies for use after graduation. It might also prove of use to librarians who have not had especial training in history, and who are consulted by high-school pupils and graduates. If the *Syllabus* can contribute to continuity of intellectual interest and of historical-mindedness after as well as before graduation, it would be of decided value. The *Syllabus* should stimulate to an active and positive mental attitude. The pupil should be aided to

regard his work in history not as the reading of so many pages. It should help him to regard historical work as a process of observing, recording, and comparing sequence and consequence. He should learn to hunt up historical data, to arrange his facts in some orderly fashion and to interpret them rationally.

A final subject on which the committee and the schools desire discussion and expression is this: How far do the colleges desire to recommend the *Syllabus* as a basis for preparation, and how much use are they likely to make of it in the preparation of their entrance examinations? Any limitation of the freedom of the examiner in making out his paper would be neither attainable nor desirable. But by utilizing the *Syllabus* could not the colleges secure desirable unity in preparation for college, and at the same time relieve teacher and pupil of needless perplexity, and give them confidence that work based on the *Syllabus* will be honored? One New England college already in its current catalogue recommends the *Syllabus* "as an outline of these courses, giving topics, references, and practical suggestions for carrying into effect the forms of work required." The *Syllabus* was adopted by the Syllabus Committee of the Associated Academic Principals of the State of New York, and its topics will be incorporated in the New York *Regents' Syllabus*. "I think it will obviate the necessity of a similar publication by a committee of which I happen to be chairman," writes the professor of history in a western university. Statements by teachers in various parts of the country indicate a desire to see the *Syllabus* also utilized by the colleges so far as practicable. As half of the committee which made the *Syllabus* are members of the examining boards of their respective colleges, "it is psychologically probable" as one college professor expressed it at the Springfield meeting, that the *Syllabus* will be used by at least several colleges in the preparation of entrance examinations. Could it not be so used by many more colleges, to the advantage of both school and college? If so, would it not aid school and college in their common aims, if the colleges should make known, in the manner which may seem desirable to the individual institutions, their desire to see the *Syllabus* used by the schools, and their purpose to use it themselves in the preparation of entrance examinations?

The Secret of Herbart. By F. H. HAYWARD. London: Swan, Sonnenschein & Co.

Mr. F. H. Hayward, an Englishman well known in educational circles, has recently written a spicy little book called *The Secret of Herbart*. While this book does not pretend to add anything to the psychology of apperception, it does attempt to set forth the ethics of apperception from the Herbartian standpoint, to investigate the causes of sin, and to show the possibility of preventing it, in a great measure, through an educational system based on the psychology of Herbart.

The author urges that moral sensitiveness is the end and aim of all true education; that the church and the schools have both failed so far to produce this moral sensitiveness; and that certain "pernicious doctrines" of "free-will," "self-activity," and the "intervention of supernatural power, whether of good or evil, in the lives of men" are partly responsible for this failing, while the dead and formal material presented to the pupils, and the incompetence of the teachers in the primary schools must bear the rest of the blame. Interest in something worth while is one of the strongest moral safeguards; the English primary schools at present do not arouse interest in anything. Interest is, according to Herbart, impossible without the apperception of new material